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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

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APPROVED D.E.Boster
1/22/59

DATE: January 16, 1959
4:00 P.M.-
5:30 P.M.

SUBJECT: U.S.-Soviet Relations

PARTICIPANTS: Anastas I. Mikoyan, Deputy Premier of the USSR;
Mikhail A. Menshikov, Soviet Ambassador;
Oleg A. Troyanovski, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, USSR;
Aleksandr Alekseevich Soldatov, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, USSR;
John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State;
Christian A. Herter, Under Secretary of State;
Livingston T. Merchant, Assistant Secretary;
Llewellyn E. Thompson, American Ambassador to Moscow;
Edward L. Freers, Director, Office of Eastern European Affairs

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In resuming the conversation from the morning session, Mikoyan indicated that he would like to make some more remarks about the Middle East.

He said the Soviet Union could not remain tranquil when bases were being set up in countries like Iran and Turkey. They could not reconcile such activity with our peaceful statements. The security of the United States had nothing to do with their southern frontier. Our actions only rendered the United States more insecure since some of these countries might involve us in local conflicts. The Ambassador of India, on the platform with him the other day, had stated that the arming of Pakistan by the United States was a danger to it. Pakistan made threatening statements about Afghanistan. The Soviet Union could not understand either the attitude of the Shah or of the United States regarding Iran. The Soviets had been assured by the Shah that he wanted to improve relations with the USSR and that Iranian territory would not be used against the Soviet Union and no foreign bases would be established. Since talks with him two years ago, Iranian-Soviet relations had improved visibly. Precise frontiers had been agreed upon after 100 years of uncertainty, financial claims had been settled to mutual satisfaction, plans for building hydro-electric stations along the frontier had been agreed upon and trade had improved. Then after the Baghdad Pact split occurred, projects for new agreements emerged. If they were signed, this would bring about a considerable deterioration of Soviet relations with Iran and with the United States. The same applied to Turkey, even though it was part of NATO. New American "pactomania" gave rise to serious misgivings. Did the United States

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intend to interfere here or to find common ground with the Soviet Union?

The Secretary said he could not speak for other States, but we considered collective security arrangements a sound principle for countries that want them. Such countries as India and Egypt did not want them and that was their own business. Iran, Turkey or Pakistan would never be used as bases for aggressive United States action against the Soviet Union. With the increased range of missiles, it made no practical difference whether a base were nearby or far away. The USSR perhaps could annihilate the United States from its own bases. The concept that bases in nearby areas were more dangerous than those in remote areas was becoming increasingly fictitious. We had no intention of establishing United States bases in Iran.

Mikoyan inquired why in that case the United States was widening its network of bases, for example in Turkey -- and arming them with atomic weapons. The Secretary said countries lying close to the overwhelming power of the Soviet Union naturally wanted to see effective supporting power nearby. He had often told their leaders that more remote power was equally effective. It was human nature to want to see something. This was more of psychological than of great practical significance.

Mikoyan wondered whether our actions regarding pacts led to a deterioration of United States relations not only with the Soviet Union but with non-members of these pacts as well, and thus increased anti-American feeling. How could Iraq trust the United States when three countries surrounding it were allied to the latter and were receiving military assistance from it? They could threaten Iraq or the UAR. These American actions led to acute situations. The Soviet Union on the other hand had good relations with these countries in spite of differing domestic systems.

The Secretary said we were always happy to get advice, but thought that the governments concerned felt we were following the correct policy. Our helping other nations should not be a threat or menace to the USSR. It does constitute assurance to the peoples concerned who are frightened by the magnitude of Soviet power so near at hand. Mikoyan said he couldn't claim any right to offer advice about United States policy but wanted to be frank in expressing his views. The Secretary remarked that he did not want Mikoyan to feel that he resented this.

Mikoyan inquired whether it was the United States intention to provide West Germany with atomic weapons. The Secretary said that under the provisions of the Atomic Energy Act, which were not likely to be changed in the predictable future, the United States could not in peace time supply nuclear weapons to any other country. Several NATO countries were anxious to have them under their control but we had had to turn them down. There were no such weapons in Europe not under US control. The Brussels Treaty prohibited the Federal Republic from producing atomic weapons on its own. With regard to press reports mentioned by Mikoyan about lifting restrictions, we did not propose any changes of the Act. We did get it changed to furnish nuclear information to the United Kingdom, on the theory that it was already a nuclear power. We were not even doing this for

other

other countries.

The Secretary took up the matter of the Geneva talks on test suspension and surprise attacks. He said he wanted to qualify one earlier remark about the overwhelming support of the people and the Congress for the Administration's policy. He should have indicated that there was a difference of opinion in this country about what our policy should be concerning test suspension. We could see that the latest report about possibilities of detecting underground tests might be interpreted as reflecting a shift in our policy and as having been designed to block negotiations. This was not the case and, as he had said earlier, we did want agreement. Problems as to what was detectable, what system was required, how it would operate were very complicated but we hoped for a successful outcome and were prepared to negotiate in good faith. We realized that the Soviet Union did not want to be in an unfavorable position in the voting in the Control Commission. We hoped the Soviet Union would understand our position that a control system could hardly work if the country in which it operated had a veto power over its functioning. We would have to study the composition of the control body further. He recalled the offer of the Soviet delegation that it might submit a list of matters where the veto power should apply. When this was submitted it might help to resolve the matter.

Mikoyan agreed. He said the Secretary had truly understood Soviet misgivings regarding the American position. The Soviets were generally not too suspicious but did think that doubts could be derived from certain facts. Until a year ago perhaps, people had been saying that it would be impossible to detect explosions. But they could be detected and were being detected. It was impossible to conceal information from intelligence agents in their country and from apparatus outside. The problem was complicated even when scientists dealt with it, but politicians completely complicated it. The Soviets had been apprehensive about the earlier talks, but the scientists had been able to reach agreement. Now, after we had been talking for several months, suddenly American scientists came up with a new discovery that underground tests could not be detected. The Soviets were left with the impression that if this difficulty were overcome, a new one would be put up. We might assert that we could not detect underwater explosions and there would be new talks about oceans.

Mikoyan said he was gratified with the Secretary's statement that we did desire an agreement. They did, too, and would negotiate in good faith. This agreement could be a test as to whether we could agree on any topic. This problem was a clear one and agreement could be reached if the desire were present.

The Secretary said we do detect many Soviet tests but have no way of knowing whether we have detected them all. Mikoyan said that we had not detected more than they had exploded in any event. The Secretary wondered whether we had detected as many. He said if the Soviets have detection devices more advanced than ours, this would be helpful. Mikoyan said that if they did, and agreement were reached, we could all use them. He said the Soviets believed that they could detect all of our tests and that we could detect all of theirs. It wasn't the politicians who decided these questions, anyway. The Soviets were willing

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to go on with the discussions in the hope of agreement.

In speaking about the surprise attack talks, the Secretary said the approach of the Soviet Delegation had been totally different from ours. They had wanted to discuss the political elements of the problem. We had wanted the experts to do something productive on a technical non-political basis, as had been done in the technical talks on test suspension. As we had indicated in our note yesterday, we wanted the conference to go on. However, we were not in a position to resume the talks as rapidly as the Soviet Union had desired. Our team was not qualified nor did it have instructions to carry on in the form and manner apparently desired by the Soviet Union. We would have to have some time to explore the matter in the light of the Soviet delegation's position to see if a broader basis could be found to resume the talks. We realized that the Soviet Union might misapprehend our attitude. But, it could be sure that we were not employing delaying tactics but were, in fact, engaging in an intensive restudy of our position.

Mikoyan must have become aware by now that there was a great deal of emotional feeling here about the fate of the crew of the C-130 plane which was shot down in the Soviet Union. Anything the Soviet Union might do to satisfy the anxiety of the American public would be helpful from the standpoint of our relations.

Mikoyan said they had done all they could. However, other information had been given out to the public and this had given rise to suspicions on their part. They had returned all the bodies after the crash. They didn't know about any other personnel since no one had informed them beforehand about the plane and its crew. It made no sense for them to hold any bodies or living crewmen and they were unable to understand the point of American insistence. In fact, it irritated them. They had felt at first that we might not have understood them, but their information had been repeated so often this could not be the case. They, in fact, had a complaint of their own on this matter. They did not know why American planes flew over their territory. It would be better not to endanger lives by such a practice. They would welcome advance information on any planes coming into their country.

The Secretary said that Mr. Mikoyan should appreciate that we don't send planes over their territory to be shot down. This would be stupid. Regular commercial air routes did run close to the Soviet border, however, and it was easy to get off the track.

Mikoyan quickly declared that the plane had not been shot down. It had crashed. He said he knew that regular planes fly close to Soviet borders but technical difficulties could lead to political difficulties.

The Secretary said that as a final point he felt he should not leave the Minister under any doubt about the Berlin situation. The Western Powers would not acquiesce in any Soviet turnover of responsibilities in the Eastern zone to the GDR. We had no way of physically compelling the Soviet Union to discharge what was referred to in the agreement of 1949 as the occupation, but our side could not be compelled to recognize the GDR as a substitute for the USSR.

Mikoyan

Mikoyan said that the Soviets had, first of all, proposed a free city. If the proposal were accepted, with any observations and amendments suggested by us and with guarantees, this question would not arise. If the proposal did not lead anywhere they would have to carry through with their announced turnover. The Secretary said that, in this case, we would have to follow through with our announced intentions.

Mikoyan said he hoped that all this would not arise. The complications in the situation, however, depended upon us. If we prejudged the situation in advance and if nothing had changed about Berlin, the Soviets would be compelled to fulfill their commitment. They wanted no aggravation of the situation. They suggested that we consider corrections and amendments to their proposals. Adenauer apparently complicated matters as far as we were concerned and perhaps he could consider such corrections and amendments as well.

The Secretary said that he had been authorized by the United Kingdom and France to state that the United States attitude expressed by him was fully supported by them.

Mikoyan said this could all be reconsidered, but not here and now. He thought that the Secretary's reference to the authorization of our Allies might have stemmed from some apprehension on the Secretary's part that he had been leading them forward and that they had been hanging on his coattails.